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EVALUATION OF (IM)POLITENESS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY AMONG JAPANESE STUDENTS, JAPANESE PARENTS AND AMERICAN STUDENTS ON EVALUATION OF ATTENTIVENESS

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Abstract

This study explores the evaluation of (im)politeness, which is made by a hearer (or a beneficiary). Although discursive researchers advocate the importance of the evaluation of (im)politeness made by a hearer in politeness research, empirical studies on the evaluation of (im)politeness are still limited. The non-linguistic aspect has not been much researched in previous politeness studies. This study tries to fill these gaps in politeness research, by focusing on evaluation of (im)politeness from the non-linguistic perspective.

Among many other things, the evaluation of attentiveness (demonstrator's preemptive response to a beneficiary's verbal/non-verbal cues or situations surrounding a beneficiary and a demonstrator, which takes the form of offering) is focused on in this study, making cross-cultural (Japanese and American) and cross-generational (university students and their parents' age groups) comparisons. The data were collected through a questionnaire, which consisted of six situations, and interviews. 298 people (Japanese university students, Japanese parents and American university students) served as the participants. The results of the questionnaire data show that there were significant differences among the participants in the evaluation of attentiveness in two situations, those of the interview data revealing that most participants evaluated attentiveness positively, except in two situations. This study contributes to further understanding of (im)politeness from the perspective of attentiveness with cross-cultural and cross-generational differences as well as similarities.

Keywords: Evaluation; (Im)politeness; Attentiveness; Japanese; Americans; Generation.

1. Introduction

Recent politeness research has made a shift to a discursive approach. According to Kádár (2010), politeness research has made a critical turn, which perhaps began with Eelen's (2001) monograph. "Discursive" refers to this post-2000 turn. Kádár and Mills (2011: 7) advocate that the "discursive" turn in politeness research was initiated by three influential monographs by Eelen (2001), Mills (2003) and Watts (2003). Discursive researchers aim to put focus not only on the speaker's production of certain utterances but also on the hearer's evaluation of them (Kádár 2010; Kádár and Mills 2011: 7). According to Locher (2006: 253), the discursive approach to politeness recognizes the evaluative and norm-oriented character of politeness by claiming that politeness belongs to the interpersonal level of linguistic interaction. Some researchers (Haugh 2007b: 313; Mills 2003; Spencer-Oatey 2005: 97) argue that politeness is not behavior per se but an evaluation of behavior. According to Eelen (2001) and Haugh

(2010a: 11), evaluation of (im)politeness has been largely ignored by politeness researchers. In line with the aim of the discursive approach and trying to fill the gap in politeness research, the focus of the present study is the evaluation of (im)politeness. In particular, this paper investigates the evaluation of attentiveness, i.e., the demonstrator's preemptive response to a beneficiary's verbal/non-verbal cues or situations surrounding a beneficiary and a demonstrator, which takes the form of offering.

Another basic concept of a discursive or postmodern approach is to make a difference between the interactant' and the researcher's interpretations of politeness, labeling the former as "first-order" and the latter as "second-order" politeness. In order to reach theoretical second-order conclusions by means of objective data analysis, avoiding subjectivity (which researchers inherently posess) and the exclusion of certain views about politeness, focus on the lay interpretation of politeness is needed (Kádár and Mills 2011: 8). In other words, first-order politeness (politeness1) (Terkourafi 2012; Watts et al. 1992; Watts 2003) needs to be focused on so that it would be possible to better theorize second-order politeness (politeness2) (Eelen 2001; Terkourafi 2011). Research on politeness1 could improve politeness2-oriented theories such as Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983), but also could confirm at least some aspects or parts of their universalist assumptions, as the empirical findings of the article will show.

Garcés-Conejos Blitvich et al. (2010: 691) argue that "the discursive approach shifts the focus of its research agenda from analysts' interpretation based on models or theories of im-politeness (politeness2) to providing evidence that the participants themselves have evaluated a given behavior as polite or rude (politeness1)". As Haugh (2010c: 140) rightly points out, "… if we as researchers do not consider the evaluations of ordinary speakers of particular interactions as "polite" or "offensive", among other things, then we are neglecting an area of very real concern to such speakers." These claims are similar to what Spencer-Oatey (2011: 3566) advocates as follows: Most people agree that it is essential to hear the voice of the participants rather than that of the analyst. Some recent works, which collected data from lay people, include the following. Attempting to conceptualize politeness in Greek society, Sifianou and Tzanne (2010) collected data on what lay people think about (im)politeness. In view of a hearer's perception, Pinto (2011) considered the folk-perceptions of American informants to investigate how they perceive their own style of politeness in the context of a service encounter. Chang and Haugh (2011) examined the evaluations of im/politeness from the perspective of apology, gathering data from lay people (Australians and Taiwanese). This study also collects data from lay people, investigating evaluation of attentiveness.

Evaluation of (im)politeness is, needless to say, a central issue in the research of impoliteness (e.g., Bousfield 2007a, 2007b; Bousfield and Locher 2008; Culpeper 1996, 2003, 2005; Locher and Bousfield 2008; Nishimura 2010). It is considered to be impolite or rude[1], when a recipient (hearer (H)/receiver (R)/beneficiary (B) of

[1] The definition of impoliteness and rudeness vary according to researchers. For instance, Locher and Bousfield (2008: 3) define impoliteness as "behavior that is face-aggravating in a particular context." Nishimura (2010: 35) uses "impoliteness" (impoliteness2 as a theoretical concept) to refer to cases in which an intentional face-attack can be identified and "rudeness" to indicate all other cases. Nishimura (2010: 35) uses the term "rudeness" to refer to situations in which there is no intentional face-attack but inappropriate behavior occurs as a result of the sender's ignorance or mistake. Culpeper (2005: 38) defines impoliteness as follows: "Impoliteness comes about when: (1) the speaker communicates face-attack intentionally, or (2) the hearer perceives and/or constructs behavior as intentionally face-attacking, or a combination of (1) and (2)." Terkourafi (2008: 61-62) believes that "in impoliteness the face-threat is taken to be accidental … whereas in rudeness the face-threat is taken to be intentional." In contrast, Kienpointner (2008: 245) and House (2010: 565) treat both terms as synonyms, whereas Tracy (2008) suggests using face-attack instead, for both. In this study, impoliteness and rudeness are used in the same sense, following Kienpointner (2008) and House (2010).

attentiveness) evaluates others' (speaker (S)/actor (A)/demonstrator (D) of attentiveness) utterances or behavior negatively. When S/A/D's utterances or behaviors do not match H/R/B's expectation or norms, H/R/B may feel S/A/D is impolite or rude, or S/A/D's utterances or behaviors are inappropriate (non-politic in Watts' (2008: 313) terms.)

Evaluation of (im)politeness is important also from the perspective of metapragmatics. According to Verschueren (1999: 188), metapragmatics is "the systematic study of the metalevel, where indicators of reflexive awareness are to be found in the actual choice-making that constitutes language use". Verschueren (2000: 441) argues that the study of the metalinguistic dimension of language could be called metapragmatics. According to Overstreet (2010: 266-267), the prefix *meta* ('above', 'beyond') marks a shift in perspective that is tied to reflexivity, or the ability not only to create utterances, but also to recognize and talk about features of those utterances. Overstreet (2010: 267) argues that "metapragmatics is concerned with a particular type of reflexivity, one that is in evidence when speakers indicate in some way that they are aware of pragmatic features and potential pragmatic interpretations of utterances." According to Caffi (2009: 625), there are three senses in metapragmatics: (1) the theoretical debate on pragmatics and its central concerns, its epistemological foundations, and the definition of its relevant object and scope, (2) the conditions that make speakers' use of language possible and effective and (3) the investigation of that area of the speakers' competence that reflects judgments of appropriateness on one's own and other people's communicative behavior. Evaluation of (im)politeness is concerned with the third sense. According to Eelen (2001: 35), "metapragmatic politeness" is "instances of talk about politeness as a concept, about what people perceive politeness to be all about." Haugh (2010b) suggests that since the interplay between evaluations of im/politeness1 and im/politeness1 norms is open for examination by analysts in these kinds of metapragmatic data, exploring im/politeness1 from a metaparagmatic perspective is critical if we are to further develop our current theorizing of im/politeness.

Most of previous (im)politeness research has been focused almost exclusively on linguistic performance. Both Eelen (2001) and Sifianou and Tzanne (2010) argue that the non-verbal aspect has been lacking in (im)politeness research so far; and they admit the need to research (im)politeness also at a non-linguistic level. Haugh (2011: 264) points out that much of the work on politeness in East Asia thus far has focused on linguistic forms. In the present study, therefore, (im)politeness at a non-linguistic level is investigated. In this study, Japanese culture is included, which may partly contribute to further understanding of politeness in East Asia.

In the evaluation of (im)politeness, a hearer plays a central role, because the evaluation is made by a hearer[2]. Eelen (2001: 109) also points out this view, noting that "in everyday practice (im)politeness occurs not so much when the speaker produces behaviour but rather when the hearer evaluates that behaviour." Research on the evaluation of (im)politeness, which is made by a hearer, is important, as "… the final decision as to whether something is perceived as polite or impolite lies in H's interpretation, who judges the relational aspect of an utterance with respect to H's own norms (frames, appropriateness, expectations, personal style, etc.)" (Locher 2004: 90) and "politeness will always be identified and evaluated by both the speaker and the hearer as norm-based" (Locher 2004: 91).

With regard to norms, Haugh (2010a: 11) argues that they are not pre-existing constructs that drive social interaction, but are themselves discursively co-constructs through interaction. Chang and Haugh (2011: 412) suggest the following two norms: Empirical norms and moral norms, the former being defined as encompassing (linguistic) behavior interactants think is *likely* to be occasioned in particular, localized contexts based on the sum of their individual experiences, and the latter being defined

[2] Fukushima (2010) stresses the importance of hearer's aspect in the study of requests.

as involving (linguistic) behavior interactants think *should* be occasioned (original emphasis). Chang and Haugh (2011: 412) argue that the evaluations of (im)politeness are closely tied to converging and diverging interpretations of actions that are interactionally achieved in situated discourse, as well as the above two norms to which such evaluations arise. According to Culpeper (2011: 31-36), the following definitions of social norms can be distinguished by their emphasis on one (or more) of the following three aspects: Rationality and self-interest, habits and social 'oughts'. Culpeper (2011: 36) uses the term social norms in the last sense, which relate to authoritative standards of behavior, and entail positive or negative evaluations of behavior as being consistent or otherwise with those standards.

Norms and cultures are closely related. Admitting the difficulty of defining culture, Chang and Haugh (2011: 413) offer a broad conceptualization of it as encompassing ways of perceiving, shared knowledge, norms, values and practices, which are learned and shared through (un)conscious observation, interaction and imitation amongst members of the social group in question. Culture in the lay sense can be invoked by participants as a way of drawing boundaries between self(-group) and other(-group), and in this sense ties in with notions of group membership and identity (Chang and Haugh 2011: 413). "Macro-cultures" (in the sense of "Japanese culture" or "American culture") are very heterogeneous and contain a variety of "sub-cultures" or "micro-cultures." Evaluation of (im)politeness is made according to such cultural identity, which derives from both empirical and moral norms. According to Kecskes (2012: 613), participants bring prior knowledge into intercultural interactions that influences the communicative process. Participants' prior knowledge and their norms may also influence evaluation of attentiveness. Bearing the above in mind, this study investigates a cross-cultural comparison of the evaluation of attentiveness by people who come from different cultures (Japanese and American).

A cross-generational comparison is also made in this study, because of the following reasons. First, although cross-cultural studies have often been meant to be those among different national groups, cross-cultural differences do not necessarily arise between people with different national groups. Spencer-Oatey (2008: 3) and Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009: 46) argue that all people are simultaneously members of a number of different groups and categories; for example, gender groups, ethnic groups, generational groups, national groups, professional groups and that all these different groups can be seen as different cultural groups. This implies that cross-cultural differences may not be due only to national groups. Secondly, despite the assumption that there may be cross-cultural differences among the participants with different national groups in demonstration or evaluation of attentiveness, there were not many differences in the studies by Fukushima (2000, 2004, 2009)[3]. This may have been due to the participants' generational groups. That is, the participants in these studies were all young university students, who belong to the same generation. In a sense, they belong to the similar culture paradigm, i.e., young generation and university students (Fukushima 2009: 516). Mills (2009: 1056) argues that "rather than assuming that cultures and language groups are homogeneous in their usage, we need to be aware of the heterogeneity within cultural groups." A generation or an age group may be one of the factors for the heterogeneity within the same cultural group. Murphy (2010: 13) argues that research on language and age has not been explored to the extent of the other sociolinguistic variables. Not many studies have investigated generational differences in politeness research (except for Fukushima 2011; Sifianou and Tzanne 2010, to my knowledge).

[3] In Fukushima (2000), demonstration of attentiveness by British and Japanese participants was investigated, although the term "solicitousness" was employed in the same sense as attentiveness. In Fukushima (2004), evaluation of attentiveness by British, Swiss and Japanese participants was investigated. In Fukushima (2009), evaluation of attentiveness by British and Japanese participants was investigated.

This study also explores the correlation between degree of imposition to demonstrate attentiveness and the evaluation of attentiveness, as there may be a relationship between them and no statistical analyses were made in previous studies on evaluation of attentiveness (Fukushima 2004, 2009). The research questions of the present study are as follows:

1. Are there any differences among the participants of different generations and different cultural backgrounds in the evaluation of attentiveness?
2. Are there any differences among the participants in the reasons for the evaluation of attentiveness?
3. Are there any differences among the participants in rating the degree of imposition to demonstrate attentiveness?
4. Is there any correlation between the degree of imposition to demonstrate attentiveness and the evaluation of attentiveness?

The next section reviews attentiveness; and section 3 presents the study. The results and discussion follow.

2. Attentiveness

Attentiveness (*kikubari*) can be defined as demonstrator's preemptive response to a beneficiary's verbal/non-verbal cues or situations surrounding a beneficiary and a demonstrator, which takes the form of offering. It can be manifested linguistically (or verbally) (e.g., "Shall I lend you my pen?" to a beneficiary who searches for a pen) and behaviorally (or non-verbally) (e.g., A demonstrator hands a pen to a beneficiary, who searches for a pen), or both linguistically and behaviorally (e.g., A demonstrator hands a pen to a beneficiary, saying "You can use this") (Fukushima 2009: 504-505). The informants of Sifianou & Tzanne (2010: 681) consider "turn to people in need" to be polite behavior. This "turn to people in need" is the idea behind attentiveness. Attentiveness is one of the socially valued characteristics of communicative behavior (Riley 2007: 217). Attentiveness derives from consideration for the beneficiary (Fukushima 2009: 505) i.e., a demonstrator thinks of the well-being of a potential beneficiary (Fukushima 2011: 550).

Below is an example of attentiveness[4] demonstrated at a conference dinner. The background is that four people (a Taiwanese, a New Zealander and two Japanese, including myself) happened to sit at the same table at a conference dinner. A Taiwanese (M) usually uses her English name. As I (S) wanted to know her Chinese name, I talked to her.

1: S: What is your Chinese name? Could you possibly mark your name in the conference book, so that I can remember it? Otherwise, I cannot recognize your paper written in your Chinese name.

2: M: Here (indicating her name in the conference book).

3: S: Oh, your presentation is already over.

Immediately after this conversation, the following attentiveness was demonstrated: Y (a Japanese national, who happened to sit next to me) handed me a ballpoint pen without saying anything. I have not asked him to lend me a ballpoint pen, i.e., he preempted my need. In this case, attentiveness was non-linguistically demonstrated; and a trigger for attentiveness to arise was a verbal cue (I mentioned of marking her name in the

[4] See another example of attentiveness in Fukushima (2011: 551).

conference book in turn 1) and a situation, i.e., a conference dinner. Possible shared knowledge between a demonstrator and a beneficiary may have been that it would be sometimes difficult to catch/remember foreign names and that people may not have a pen in hand at a dinner table. Attentiveness demonstrated in this case was with a low imposition, i.e., it did not take a demonstrator much time, effort, financial burden to demonstrate attentiveness. I, a beneficiary of that attentiveness, evaluated Y's attentiveness very positively, although I did not have an intention of receiving the attentiveness. Attentiveness can be manifested linguistically, non-linguistically (or behaviorally) or both linguistically and non-linguistically (Fukushima 2009: 505). The above example was attentiveness demonstrated non-linguistically.

Although attentiveness has not been treated as a central topic in pragmatics research, it has been mentioned in several studies. Although the term "attentiveness" was not used in these studies, the concept is the same as attentiveness. For example, attentiveness is a response to off-record requests in Sifianou (1993). Sifianou (1993: 73) states that "This giving behavior is not restricted to tangible goods, but also covers various ways of volunteering to do things for others, which indicates knowledge of and consideration for their needs." In Haugh (2007a: 94-95), attentiveness is related to politeness implicature and speaker intentions. Sugito (2005) clarifies how *kikubari* (i.e., attentiveness) is composed of from "metalinguistic behavior expressions." For example, "*konna naiyou no koto itte (kaite) iikana?"* 'Is it all right to say (write) this kind of content?' indicates a speaker's *kikubari* to the topic. These metalinguistic behavior expressions are similar to hedges and disclaimers (e.g., I don't want to sound like your mother or anything, but …), which can be considered as a metapragmatic function (Overstreet 2010: 268). As Sugito's (2005) description on attentiveness is on the linguistic level, research into attentiveness at a non-linguistic level (or "behavioral politeness" in Fukushima's term (2004)) is still needed, therefore, it is researched in this study.

Azuma (2009: 176-178) states that Japanese society belongs to a high-context culture, whereas American culture to a low-context culture and that *kigakiku* (i.e., being attentive) belongs to a high-context culture. He cites a situation when one invites someone to his/her home as examples in Japan and in the U.S. In Japan, a host/hostess serves cold barley tea or juice in summer, and hot tea or coffee in winter, without asking a guest. A host/hostess, who infers what a guest wants and serves a drink, is *kigakiku* (attentive), getting a positive evaluation for his/her attentiveness. In the U.S. on the other hand, a host asks a guest what s/he would like to drink, saying, for example, "I have Coke, Seven-Up, orange juice, apple juice, milk, ice tea. What would you like?" (Azuma 2009: 178). If a host serves an American guest a drink without asking, the guest may not evaluate that attentiveness positively. This difference has to do with inference, i.e., a Japanese host/hostess may be able to infer the need of guests better than an American host/hostess. And this shows that inference is more valued in Japanese culture than in American culture.

Miyake (2011: iv-vi) also shows the importance of inference in Japanese communication, giving the following example. Miyake had a car accident in Los Angeles and an ambulance came. When an ambulance attendant asked her, "Are you all right?", she answered, "I'm all right." And the attendant and an ambulance drove away. Miyake was shocked. She later realized that "I'm all right" in Japanese (*Daijyoubu desu*) is used when one expects the other party to infer the situation (2011: vi). In the above incident, Miyake expected or believed that the ambulance attendant would bring her to a hospital, inferring that she was not all right, when she said, "I'm all right." The difference between high-context and low-context cultures, including the difference on inference, may be similar to that of collectivism and individualism; and attentiveness may be more valued in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures.

Inference (see Arundale 2008: 241, for example) by a potential demonstrator of attentiveness is a prerequisite for attentiveness to arise (Fukushima 2011: 551). Firstly, for attentiveness to arise, inference is needed by a demonstrator of attentiveness.

That is, a demonstrator infers what the other party needs. A beneficiary of attentiveness may or may not have an intention to receive attentiveness. When the inference made by a demonstrator is consistent with a beneficiary's intention, and when attentiveness is what a beneficiary expected, a beneficiary may make a positive evaluation of that attentiveness. Even when a beneficiary did not have any intention to receive any attentiveness, s/he makes a positive evaluation when attentiveness was what s/he needed (like the pen example at a conference dinner).

Fukushima (2009: 503) found that attentiveness was related to interpersonal reality; and interpersonal reality was valued in collectivist cultures. Thus, it can be said that attentiveness is valued in collectivist cultures. According to Ting-Toomey (2009: 231), individualism refers to the broad value tendencies of a culture in emphasizing the importance of the 'I' identity over the 'we' identity, individual rights over group interests, and individuated-focused emotions over social-focused emotions. Collectivism refers to the broad value tendencies of a culture in emphasizing the importance of the 'we' identity over the 'I' identity, in-group interests over individual wants, and other-face concerns over self-face concerns. According to the individualism index values by Hofstede (1991: 53), the U.S.A. ranks the top among 50 countries and 3 regions and Japan is the 22/23 rank. This indicates that the U.S.A. is the most individualistic and Japan is collectivistic.

Yamaguchi (1994: 175) states that it has now become a platitude that the Japanese are collectivistic. According to Yamaguchi (1994: 184), the collectivism score is positively correlated with their age. Yamaguchi (1994: 184) states that the Japanese people faced great poverty in the years immediately after World War II. Because of the economic success of Japan, it is to be expected that Japanese can now afford to be more individualistic than before. He (1994: 184) further states that the effects of affluence would likely be most prominent among younger Japanese, because they did not experience the poverty that previous generations endured. Yamaguchi (1994: 184) also points out that education in Japan has changed drastically since World War II, from a totalitarian system to a more democratic system in which students are allowed to behave more individualistically. Yamaguchi's (1994) above argument shows that the Japanese people have collectivist features, but Japanese young people are not as collectivist as the older generation.

Giving up a seat to someone in need of it in public transportation and handing over lost items were reported as instances of non-verbal politeness by the informants in Sifianou and Tzanne (2010: 672). These happen to be the same as situations 1 and 6 in the research instrument (see 3.2) in this study. In other words, the informants of Sifianou and Tzanne (2010) cited attentiveness as instances of politeness. According to Sifianou and Tzanne (2010: 672), such instances of politeness entail respondents' concern with "social identity face" or "equity rights[5]."

[5] Social identity face is closely associated with our sense of public worth (Spencer-Oatey 2002: 540). Equity rights (Spencer-Oatey 2000: 14; Spencer-Oatey 2002: 540) is one aspect of sociopragmatic interactional principles, i.e., the beliefs people typically hold value-laden beliefs about the principles that should underpin interaction (Spencer-Oatey 2008: 16). Equity rights is one aspect of sociality rights, another being association rights (Spencer-Oatey 2002: 540-541). Equity rights are defined as follows: We have a fundamental belief that we are entitled to *personal consideration from others* (my emphasis), so that we are treated fairly: that we are not unduly imposed upon or unfairly ordered about and that we are not taken advantage of or exploited, and that we receive the benefits to which we are entitled. There seem to be two components to this equity entitlement: the notion of *cost-benefit* (original emphasis) (the extent to which we are exploited, disadvantaged or benefitted, and the belief that costs and benefits should be kept roughly in balance through the principle of reciprocity), and the related issue of *autonomy-imposition* (original emphasis) (the extent to which people control us or impose on us) (Spencer-Oatey 2002: 540).

3. Data collection

The data were collected through questionnaires with six situations to obtain quantitative data; and interviews were conducted using the same six situations to obtain qualitative data.

3.1. *Participants*

3.1.1. Participants for questionnaire

As the present study attempts to investigate the differences in the evaluation of attentiveness between different generations and cultures, the following three groups of people of different generations and cultures served as the participants: 156 Japanese university students[6] (age range: 18-28; mean age: 20.2) (JS hereafter), 92 Japanese parents[7] (age range: 36-76; mean age: 51.5) (JP hereafter) and 32 American university students[8] (age range: 19-23; mean age: 20.7) (AS hereafter).

3.1.2. Participants for interviews

Eighteen participants (six participants for each group, i.e., Japanese students, Japanese parents and American students) served as the participants for interviews. Their age range and mean age of the participants were as follows, which are similar to those of the participants for the questionnaires: JS (age range: 20-22; mean age: 20.5); JP (age range: 48-55; mean age: 51.33), and AS (age range: 20-23; mean age: 21.66). They were all females in order to exclude possible gender-based influences on the evaluation of attentiveness. It would be impossible to exclude all sorts of gender-based influences (e.g., female-female interactions could be influenced by a female style of attentiveness, which could differ from male-male attentiveness), however, it would be possible to exclude at least mixed male-female interactions by confining the participants only to females.

3.2. *Research instrument (Questionnaire)*

The research instrument consisted of a description of six situations, which were based on the field notes, a five-point Likert scale and a multiple-choice questionnaire. Since the participants were university students and adults, the situations, which would be applicable to both of them, were chosen from the field notes. All the situations used in the questionnaire occurred in an actual life, some situations having occurred in a students' life, and some other in a parents' life. A few amendments were made so that the situations would suit both for a students' and a parents' life. The situations in the questionnaire varied in degree of familiarity from very familiar to not familiar at all (the relationship in situation 2 being the most familiar (a close friend/colleague) and that in situation 6 being the least familiar (a stranger)). A demonstrator in situation 1 was an

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[6] They are undergraduates of Tsuru University in Yamanashi, Japan.

[7] It was intended to collect data from those who were older than the students. The participants of this group did not have to be blood-related to their students, but they had to be only in an elder generation than the students. They included their parents, relatives and acquaintances, their parents being the majority of this group (68.5%). For this reason, this group was called Japanese parents.

[8] They are undergraduates of University of California and are all native speakers of English.

acquaintance, that in situation 2 a close friend/colleague, that in situation 3 a seminar friend/colleague, that in situation 4 a colleague, that in situation 5 a student/a subordinate and that in situation 6 a stranger. In Fukushima (2009), the evaluation of politeness by British and Japanese participants was investigated; and the social distance between a demonstrator and a beneficiary was kept the same, i.e., close. According to Himeno (2003), a beneficiary of attentiveness sometimes feels guilt, when attentiveness is demonstrated by somebody who is not close. In order to investigate whether the familiarity between a demonstrator and a beneficiary of attentiveness influences the evaluation of attentiveness, it varied (ranging from a very close friend/colleague to a total stranger) in the present study.

In each situation, attentiveness demonstrated (e.g., "A offered you a seat" in situation 1), and a question asking the participants how they would evaluate the attentiveness (e.g., "How would you evaluate that?") are stated. They are as follows (Alphabetical letters were used to name the people in the situations to avoid the influence of gender and the influence which personal names may give the participants. The ones in the parentheses were for the parents.):

Situation 1
You get on a train. You carry a lot of baggage. There are many standing passengers, but there is a vacancy in a priority seat in the same car. Your acquaintance, A, is sitting in a train, reading a book. A does not have any heavy baggage.

A offered you a seat. How would you evaluate that?

Situation 2
You and your close friend (colleague), B, have gone for lunch in the canteen (at a restaurant near the company). You have carelessly left your wallet at home. You live near the campus (the company).

B paid for your lunch. How would you evaluate that?

Situation 3
You are looking for a book, Y, for your thesis (project). C, your seminar friend (colleague), is in a big city and has stopped at a big bookstore, X. C happens to find a book, Y. It costs $50. The book, Y, is not available at local bookstores.

C bought you a book, Y. How would you evaluate that?

Situation 4
You have to suddenly take a five-day leave, because of a funeral service. According to the work schedule, your colleague at a part-time job (company), D, does not work on the days of your leave.

You found that D would work for you. How would you evaluate that?

Situation 5
You are a professor at the university (a section chief in a company). There were presentations from every group in the class (every project group). There has been a huge amount of papers submitted to you from every group.

One of your students (subordinates) helped you carry the papers to your office. How would you evaluate that?

Situation 6
When you are walking in a train station, it seemed that you have dropped your rail pass.

Someone has handed you the rail pass. How would you evaluate that?

In each situation, a five-point Likert scale was given for the evaluation of attentiveness, one being "very appreciative" and five being "not at all appreciative." The multiple choices were given for the reasons of evaluation of attentiveness, which are based on the results in Fukushima (2009). In Fukushima (2009), the participants stated any reason for evaluation of attentiveness. Those reasons could be classified into positive (e.g., they appreciated attentiveness) and negative reasons (e.g., being intrusive; feeling it as a burden). The multiple choices for the reasons of evaluation in the questionnaire in the present study, therefore, included the following: (1) I needed that. Or that was helpful; (2) I felt it as a burden. Or it was imposing; and (3) Other[9].

The degree of imposition may also influence the evaluation of attentiveness. Thus, situations with both high and low degrees of imposition were included, but the perception of the degree of imposition may differ individually or according to generation or culture. The participants, therefore, were asked to evaluate the degree of imposition in the questionnaire. A five-point Likert scale was given, one being "the attentiveness does not require a demonstrator any imposition" and five being "the attentiveness requires a demonstrator a big imposition."

3.3. *Procedure*

3.3.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to the participants in their mother tongue, i.e., in Japanese to Japanese students and Japanese parents, and in English to American students. In each situation, the participants were asked (1) to evaluate attentiveness on a five-point Likert scale, one being "they appreciate the attentiveness very much" and five being "they do not appreciate the attentiveness at all"[10]; (2) to select a reason for the evaluation of attentiveness from the three reasons given ((1) I needed that. Or that was helpful; (2) I felt it as a burden. Or it was imposing; and (3) Other); and (3) to evaluate the degree of imposition of attentiveness on a five-point Likert scale, one being "a small imposition" and five being "a big imposition".

[9] Although it could be assumed that those who evaluated attentiveness positively would select the first choice among the three choices and those who evaluated attentiveness negatively would select the second choice, the multiple choices were used. This was partly because the participants in Fukushima (2009), who could write any reason, wrote too many reasons, some of which could not be classified either into positive or negative reasons. The participants could also write some other reasons in choice 3, if they thought their reason would not match neither choice 1 nor choice 2.

[10] In Locher and Watts' (2005: 11) view, relational work "comprises the entire continuum of verbal behavior from direct, impolite, rude or aggressive interaction through to polite interaction" (Darics 2010: 132). Relational work is a term that covers the entire spectrum of behavior and cannot be simply reduced to a dichotomy of impolite and polite behavior (Locher, 2006: 255). Following this idea of "continuum", this study does not ask the participants to evaluate whether attentiveness is polite or impolite as a dichotomy, but on a scale ranging from "very appreciative" to "not at all appreciative".

3.1.2. Interviews

The participants were asked to read the six situations (the same situations as in the questionnaire) and interpret the attentiveness demonstrated in each situation (e.g., A offered you a seat). They were asked to state how they would evaluate the attentiveness. Interviews were conducted in Japanese to Japanese students and Japanese parents, and in English to American students.

4. Data analysis

4.1. *Questionnaire*

The procedure of data analysis was as follows:

1. In order to answer research question 1 (Are there any differences among the participants in evaluation of attentiveness?), a one-way ANOVA (participants) was conducted. The mean scores of the evaluation of attentiveness were also calculated.

2. In order to answer research question 2 (Are there any differences among the participants in the reasons for evaluation of attentiveness?), the participants' choices among the multiple choices of the reasons were summed up.

3. In order to answer research question 3 (Are there any differences among the participants in rating degree of imposition of attentiveness?), a one-way ANOVA (participants) was conducted. The mean scores of the degree of imposition of attentiveness were also calculated.

4. In order to answer research question 4 (Are there any relationship/correlation between degree of imposition to demonstrate attentiveness and evaluation of attentiveness?), Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated.

4.2. *Interviews*

All the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

5. Results

5.1. *Questionnaire*

5.1.1. Evaluation of attentiveness

In answering the first research question (Are there any differences among the participants in evaluation of attentiveness?), there were significant differences in situations 5 (papers) and 6 (rail pass), according to the results of the first analysis[11]. In situation 5, the score by American students was significantly higher than that by

[11] The results of ANOVA showed that the main effect of the participants was significant in situations 5 ($df=2/279$, $F=8.047$, $p<0.01$) and 6 ($df=2/280$, $F=4.942$, $p<0.01$). A post hoc test (Bonferroni test) was conducted and the results showed that there were significant differences among Japanese students, Japanese parents and American students ($p<0.05$) both in situations 5 and 6.

Japanese parents and also Japanese students. In situation 6, too, the score by American students was significantly higher than that by Japanese parents and also Japanese students. As "one" on a five-point scale was "they appreciate the attentiveness very much" and "five" was "they do not appreciate the attentiveness at all," these results mean that both in situations 5 and 6, American students appreciated the attentiveness least; and Japanese students appreciated the attentiveness most. The mean scores of the evaluation of attentiveness by each group of the participants are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Mean scores of evaluation of attentiveness

Situation	Mean scores
1 (seat)	JS: 1.455 (.837) JP: 1.5 (.777) AS: 1.593 (.756)
2 (lunch)	JS: 1.352 (.689) JP: 1.304 (.588) AS: 1.468 (.915)
3 (book)	JS: 1.685 (.962) JP: 1.673 (.840) AS: 1.718 (1.142)
4 (work)	JS: 1.301 (.656) JP: 1.423 (.801) AS: 1.406 (.910)
5 (papers)	JS: 1.301 (.636) JP: 1.413 (.743) AS: 1.875 (1.099)**
6 (rail pass)	JS: 1.057 (.363) JP: 1.086 (.028) AS: 1.312 (.820)**

The numbers outside the parentheses indicate the mean scores and the numbers in the parentheses indicate the standard deviation. **There was a significant difference at the .01 level ($p<.01$).
JS: Japanese students; JP: Japanese parents; AS: American students

5.1.2. Reasons for the evaluation of attentiveness

The choices of the reasons for the evaluation of attentiveness were as follows: (1) I needed that. Or that was helpful; (2) I felt it as a burden. Or it was imposing; (3) Other. Overall, there were not many differences in the reasons for the evaluation of attentiveness among the three groups of the participants, most participants having selected choice 1 (I needed that. Or that was helpful) most frequently in all the situations.

A closer look at the results, however, tells us that there were some differences in percentage among the participants and the situations. For example, although the most frequently selected choice in situation 3 (book) was choice 1 by all the three groups of the participants, the participants selected choice 2 (I felt it as a burden. Or it was imposing.) (JS: 23.1%; JP: 22.8%; AS: 15.6%) more frequently than in other situations. This means that less participants selected choice 1 (I needed that. Or that was helpful) in this situation than in other situations. Although American students selected choice 1 (68.8%) most frequently in situation 5 (papers), their percentage was lower than Japanese participants (JS: 92.3%; JP: 87.0%). American students have also selected choices 2 (15.6%) and 3 (15.6%) in situation 5.

There were some different reasons in choice 3 (other)[12]. In situations 1 (seat) and 2 (lunch), some participants wrote that attentiveness was expected (by American students in situation 1 and by Japanese parents and American students in situation 2) (see note 12).

Whereas Japanese participants tended to write positive reasons, American students generally stated negative reasons in choice 3 (other) in situation 5 (papers). Japanese participants wrote "I feel consideration" (by Japanese students) or "It was natural" (by Japanese parents). American students wrote the following reasons: "A professor should be aware that a lot of papers would be turned in, so he should have brought something to carry them with". "I would feel awkward with my Prof." and "I do not want to be brown-nosing".

5.1.3. Degree of imposition of attentiveness

According to the results of the third analysis (ANOVA)[13], there was a significant

[12] Choice 3 (other) in each situation included the following. Situation 1 (seat): Giving the seat is the right thing to do and not giving up the seat would be rude (JS: 0%; JP: 2.2%; AS: 3.1%); It was helpful, but also sort of expected (only by AS: 3.1%). Situation 2 (lunch): It is mutual (*otagaisama*) (JS: 0.6%; JP: 2.2%; AS: 0%); If we are friends, it should be expected (JS: 0%; JP: 1.1%; AS: 3.1%). Situation 3 (book): I want to decide myself whether the book is necessary or not (JS: 0.6%; JP: 2.2%; AS: 0%); If someone bought that book for me, it would be a favor above and beyond the norm for such good acts; I would be so appreciative and do something extra in return (only by AS: 3.1%). Situation 4 (work schedule): Employer should have enough staff to cover incidents like this (only by AS: 3.1%); It is natural (only by JP: 2.2%); It is mutual (*otagaisama*) (JS: 0.6%; JP: 1.1%; AS: 0%). Situation 5 (papers): It is natural to do so (only by JP: 4.3%); I do not want to be brown-nosing (only by AS: 6.3%); The professor should be aware that a lot of papers would be turned in, so he should have brought something to carry them with (only by AS: 3.1%); I would feel awkward with my Prof (only by AS: 3/1%); I feel consideration (only by JS: 0.6%). Situation 6 (rail pass): It is the right thing to do (JS: 5.1%; JP: 7.6%; AS: 3.1%); If I were the one who lost a rail pass, I would like someone to hand it (JS: 1.3%; JP: 1.1%; AS: 0%); As rail pass costs a lot, it would be a problem if we lost that (only JS: 0.6%); We can solve the problem on the spot, by handing a rail pass (JS: 0.6%; JP: 1.1%; AS: 0%).

[13] The results of ANOVA showed that the main effect of the participants was significant in situations 1 ($df=2/277$, $F=6.666$. $p<0.01$), 3 ($df=2/277$, $F=5.339$, $p<0.01$) and 5 ($df=2/278$, $F=3.329$, $p<0.05$). A post hoc test (Bonferroni test) was conducted and the results showed that there were

difference in evaluating the degree of imposition among the participants in situations 1 (seat), 3 (book) and 5 (papers). In situation 1, the mean score by Japanese students (1.935) was significantly higher than that by Japanese parents (1.597) and that by American students (1.437)[14]. In situation 3, the mean score by Japanese students (2.929) was significantly higher than that by Japanese parents (2.347). In situation 5, the mean score by Japanese students (2.128) was significantly higher than that by Japanese parents (1.739).

5.1.4. Correlation between the degree of imposition and the evaluation of attentiveness

In answering the fourth research question (Is there any correlation between the degree of imposition to demonstrate attentiveness and the evaluation of attentiveness?), there were significant correlations between the degree of imposition to demonstrate attentiveness and the evaluation of attentiveness in situations 2 (lunch) and 3 (book) by Japanese students, and in situations 1 (seat), 3 (book), 4 (work) and 5 (papers) by Japanese parents. Table 2 shows Pearson correlation coefficients in each situation by each group of the participants.

Table 2. Correlation between degree of imposition and evaluation of attentiveness (Pearson correlation coefficients)

Situation	Japanese students	Japanese parents	American students
1 (seat)	0.159	0.270**	-0.228
2 (lunch)	0.402**	0.252	0.051
3 (book)	0.326**	0.545**	-0.002
4 (work)	-0.021	0.492**	0.208
5 (papers)	-0.026	0.369**	0.278
6 (rail pass)	-0.004	0.210	-0.089

**=significant at the .01 level ($p<0.01$)

5.2. *Interviews*

In interview data, major differences among the three groups of the participants in the evaluation of attentiveness were not found, except in the case of situations 3 (book) and 5 (papers). In these situations, two American students evaluated the attentiveness negatively, whereas other participants evaluated the attentiveness positively. In other

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significant differences between Japanese students and Japanese parents and between Japanese students and American students in situation 1, between Japanese students and Japanese parents in situation 3, and between Japanese students and Japanese parents in situation 5 ($p<0.05$).

[14] 1=small imposition 5=big imposition

four situations, all the three groups of the participants evaluated attentiveness positively. More detailed results of each situation are shown next.

In situation 1 (seat), all the participants evaluated the attentiveness positively. Japanese students and Japanese parents said "*Arigatai*" 'thankful,' as attentiveness demonstrated was helpful ("*Tasukattakara*" 'It was helpful'). One American student said as follows:

This person is considering.

In situation 2 (lunch), all the participants evaluated the attentiveness positively, saying "thankful," as the demonstrator helped me. One Japanese parent said as follows:

Komatteite tasukete kuretakara. 'She helped me, when I was in need.'

Although they are thankful, some participants said that they felt indebtedness at the same time. This can be seen in all the three groups. One American student said as follows:

Yeah, I'd be very thankful, but feel I'm in debt. I should treat you next time.

In situation 3 (book), Japanese students and Japanese parents evaluated the attentiveness positively, whereas there were two American students, who evaluated it negatively. One Japanese student said as follows:

Yujin ga watashino sagashiteiru hon o oboeteite kurete, nedan takaishi, jibun no youji de itteirunoni kasabaru hon o motte kaette kuretanode, kansha no doai wa ookii. 'My friend remembered the book which I had been looking for. It was expensive. She brought me back a bulky book, although she went to a big city for her own business. Therefore, I thank her very much.'

One Japanese parent said as follows:

Hitsuyo na hon dato iukoto o shitte ite, sore o sacchi shite kattekite kuretanode, arigatai. 'She knew that it was the book I needed. She inferred that and bought it for me. Therefore, I am thankful.'

Negative evaluation by American students are as follows:

C is so nice. That was ridiculous. C didn't have to buy me the book. Especially it's like $50. That would be hella-helpful. Just telling me where the book was would be helpful. Super nice 'cause it's expensive, and the fact that they remember it was just ridiculous.

He was thoughtful but rude, kind but dumb. He should have asked. Considerate but inconsiderate. He's a good guy, but he was thinking about himself. He wants to feel good by helping.

In situation 4 (work schedule), all the participants evaluated the attentiveness positively. One Japanese student said as follows:

Yasumi no hi nanoni kyuna youji, watashi no tameni yasumi o kezutte kurete arubaito o shitekurete ureshii." 'I'm grateful. Because of my sudden affair she worked part time for me, although she was supposed to take days off.'

One Japanese parent said as follows:

Yasumu kotoni natte itanoni watashi no jyoukyou o kangaete kinmu shitekuretakoto arigatai. 'She was supposed to take days off, but she worked, considering my situation. Therefore, I'm grateful.'

One American student said as follows:

I am really grateful to D.

Some participants said that they felt guilt or they felt like they owed D. This kind of statement was found in all the three groups of the participants. One American student said as follows:

I would feel real guilty. That's 5 days. That's a lot. I owe them. I have to make them up somehow.

In situation 5 (papers), most of the participants evaluated the attentiveness positively, whereas two American students evaluated it negatively. Positive evaluation expressed by a Japanese student is as follows:

Boudai na ryou ni kizuite kuretakoto to youjiga attakamo shirenainoni shiryo o hakonde kureta node ureshii. 'She realized that I had a huge amount (of papers). She carried them, although she may have had her own affair. Therefore, I am grateful.'

A Japanese parent said as follows:

Boudai na shiryou o motsu nowa taihen nanode motte moraete ureshiku omoimasu. 'It is a lot of work to carry a huge amount of papers. I am thankful, because she carried them.'

Positive evaluation by an American student was as follows:

The student is really nice. Like he really notices.

Negative evaluations by two American students were as follows:

Bribing him by helping him. He wants a better grade.

A little weird to me. At UCLA there's a TA. TA would definitely help.

In situation 6 (rail pass), all the participants evaluated the attentiveness positively. A Japanese student said as follows:

Teiki takaishi naito komaru. Sugoku kansha. 'A pass costs a lot and I will be in trouble when I lost it. I am really thankful.'

A Japanese parent said as follows:

Arigatai. Tanin ga oshiete kudasatta. Hirotte watashite kudasatta. Mizushirazu no watashi ni. 'Thankful. Someone I don't know has handed it to me. S/he picked it up. To me, who is a total stranger.'

An American student said as follows:

I would think, oh, such a nice person. Like, of course that's something that people should do, but in reality people don't so. So, it would be really nice to see someone like actually do that. Thanks, so helpful.

6. Discussion

In this section, cross-cultural and cross-generational differences as well as similarities on the evaluation of attentiveness by the three groups of the participants are discussed. It is also attempted to conceptualize (im)politeness from these results.

Attentiveness may be evaluated more positively in high-context or collectivist cultures (Japanese culture in this study) than in low-context or individualist cultures (American culture in this study), as attentiveness is much related to interpersonal reality, which is more cherished in collectivist cultures than in individualist cultures, as noted in 2.2. Inference, which is needed for attentiveness to arise, plays a more important role in Japanese culture than in American culture, as noted in 2.2. Therefore, it was anticipated that Japanese parents and Japanese students would evaluate attentiveness more positively than American students. The results of the present study showed that American students evaluated attentiveness more negatively than Japanese parents and Japanese students in situations 5 (papers) and 6 (rail pass), according to the questionnaire data[15]. And according to the interview data, two American students evaluated the attentiveness negatively in situations 3 (book) and 5 (papers). These results confirm the above anticipation and can be regarded as cross-cultural differences.

In situation 3 (book), the difference among the participants was found only in the interview data, i.e., two American students[16] evaluated the attentiveness negatively, whereas other participants evaluated it positively. One of the negative comments included "super nice" (see 5.2), which corresponds to Watts' (2005: xliii-xliv) notion, i.e., over-polite. This result confirms that over-politeness constitutes impoliteness.

As a Japanese parent appreciated the fact that a demonstrator inferred her need (She knew that it was the book I needed. She inferred that and bought it for me) in situation 3 (book), inference was one of the factors, which has lead to a positive evaluation. This coincides with Miyake's (2011) view on inference, i.e., inference is important in Japanese communication, as noted in 2.2.

A cross-cultural difference in situation 5 (papers) was that American students made a more negative evaluation of attentiveness than Japanese parents and Japanese students, according to the questionnaire data (see table 1). More American students (15.6%) selected choice 2 (I felt it as a burden. Or it was imposing) as a reason than Japanese parents (6.5%) and Japanese students (5.1%). American students, who are from an individualist culture, may place an importance on independence, as "one is independent, and one, therefore, is responsible for her/himself" is one of the features of individualist cultures. Attentiveness may sometimes mean that one cannot pursue some acts by themselves, which insinuates that one cannot act independently. This may have lead to a negative evaluation of attentiveness by American students. On the other hand, Japanese students and Japanese parents, who are believed to be from collectivist cultures, evaluated the attentiveness more positively than American students. "One depends on the others or the group s/he belongs to" is one of the features of collectivist cultures. "To depend" may sound too strong, but it may be similar to help each other or it is mutual (i.e., *otagaisama*), which was found in the reasons of choice 3 (other) in the questionnaire data by Japanese participants (see note 12). The idea behind *otagaisama* is to help others when they can, and may be helped by others when they are in need. Therefore, the Japanese participants may have regarded the attentiveness in situation 5

[15] American students had the scores 1.875 (situation 5) and 1.312 (situation 6), respectively. This tells us that the American students evaluated the attentiveness in these situations relatively positively (the score 1 was "they appreciate the attentiveness very much" and score 5 was "they do not appreciate the attentiveness at all"), although they evaluated the attentiveness more negatively than Japanese parents and Japanese students.

[16] Since the number of the participants was small (six for each group), it is difficult to determine whether the negative evaluation of attentiveness here is due to cross-cultural differences or idiosyncratic to individual participants. More interview data will clarify this problem.

(papers) as one instance of being helped when they are in need, which lead to a positive evaluation.

In the interview data in situation 5 (papers), both cross-cultural differences and similarities were found. Cross-cultural differences were found in the negative comments by American students (i.e., bribing him or a little weird), which are similar to the comments written in choice 3 (other) in the questionnaire (i.e., I do not want to be brown-nosing; I feel awkward). There were no such negative comments by Japanese participants. As for the similarities among the three groups of the participants, inference was a factor, which lead to a positive evaluation (A beneficiary was thankful, because a demonstrator inferred her need), although not all of them used the term "inference" (e.g., they have used "realized" or "notices" instead) (see 5.2). This suggests that inference is important not only in Japanese culture, as was found in situation 3 (book), but also to a certain extent in American culture. From this, it could be said that inference is one of the factors which constitutes politeness.

In situation 6 (rail pass), some cross-cultural differences were found only in the questionnaire data. American students have evaluated attentiveness most negatively among the three groups of the participants; and Japanese students evaluated it most positively (see table 1). These results may be due to the fact that American students are those at University of California, where many people use their cars (i.e., they may not use a rail pass very much). In the interview data, all the participants evaluated the attentiveness positively, saying "thankful." Although American students in the questionnaire data evaluated the attentiveness most negatively, they have selected choice 1 (I needed that. Or that was helpful) as a reason. This is similar to the interview data.

Although there were some cross-cultural differences in the evaluation of attentiveness as stated above, it was only in situations 5 (papers) and 6 (rail pass) in the questionnaire data, and in situations 3 (book) and 5 (papers) in the interview data. In other words, there were similarities across cultures in other situations. This may be partly because of a globalization, or a new perspective of Japanese culture and internationalization (or westernization) of the Japanese, as suggested in Fukushima (2004: 378). That is, the Japanese people in contemporary Japan may not be so different from others (e.g. the Americans as shown from this study), at least in the evaluation of attentiveness. Although there may be regional differences, the life in Japan has become more hectic than before. This may mean that Japanese culture has become more individualistic than before, if the hectic pace of life makes people individualistic, as the informants of Sifianou and Tzanne (2010: 682) state.

It was anticipated that there would be cross-generational differences between Japanese students and Japanese parents, i.e., Japanese parents would evaluate attentiveness more positively than Japanese students, as the collectivist score positively correlates with age, as noted in 2.2. Japanese parents, however, have not evaluated attentiveness more positively than Japanese students in any situation. There were significant differences in the evaluation of attentiveness between Japanese parents and Japanese students in situations 5 (papers) and 6 (rail pass), however, Japanese students have evaluated attentiveness more positively than Japanese parents, which was contradictory to the anticipation. This may be because Japanese parents (mean age: 51.5 (questionnaire); 51.33 (interview)) were of course older than Japanese students (mean age: 20.2 (questionnaire); 20.5 (interview)), but they were born long after World War II and educated in a democratic system in which students are allowed to behave more individualistically (Yamaguchi 1994: 184). Japanese parents in the present study may fall in the category of younger Japanese, who did not experience the poverty that previous generations endured, as noted by Yamaguchi (1994) in 2.2. Japanese parents in the present study may not have as many collectivistic features as the older generation (e.g., who were born and educated before World War II). Hirschon (2001: 26) states that giving up seats in public transport facilities (which is the same as in situation 1 in this study) is considered to be an offensive act by some older people, as they feel insulted

that they might be considered weak and infirm. Japanese parents in this study may not be so old as those people in Hirschon (2001). If somebody, who is older than the age group of this study, and if s/he was given a seat, s/he may evaluate it negatively, as s/he may prefer to deny the fact that s/he is getting old.

In the study by Sifianou and Tzanne (2010), no cross-generational differences between 78 younger (aged between 18 and 22) and 20 older informants (aged between 43-60) were found in conceptualizations of (im)politeness in Greek, although their main concern was not to make a cross-generational comparison. Sifianou and Tzanne (2010) have not given a detailed explanation, but their informants' age groups (they have not provided with the mean age) were similar to those in this study. Sifianou (2012) states as follows for this tendency: "It may be that the students reflect their parents'/family's (their in-groups') views when they have time to think and write something down, i.e., they write down what they've been taught. Or it may be that there aren't substantial differences to be recorded. It may be similar to what Pan and Kádár (2011) say for Chinese that despite large-scale socio-political changes and apparent changes in politeness norms, in essence there is considerable continuity between the earlier and modern language use." Indeed, parents' influence on children is strong; and it may take a long time for some cultural traits (both linguistic and non-linguistic) to change. In the mean time, old and new traits may co-exist: Some old traits sometimes appear more strongly than new traits, and some other time the reverse is the case. A comparison between people with many more age differences would make clearer whether there would be generational differences in the evaluation of attentiveness.

Among the situations which had significant differences on evaluation of attentiveness according to the questionnaire data, there was a significant correlation between the degree of imposition and the evaluation of attentiveness by Japanese parents only in situation 5 (papers) (see 5.1.4). Japanese parents evaluated the attentiveness in situation 5 (papers) as 1.413[17] and rated the degree of imposition as 1.739[18]. From these results, it can be said that they evaluated attentiveness positively, because the degree of imposition was low. They may not have felt the attentiveness as a burden, because it did not cause a demonstrator of attentiveness much imposition.

Next, the results of the situations, in which there were no significant differences in the evaluation of attentiveness among the participants will be discussed. According to the questionnaire data, Japanese parents generally felt the attentiveness as a burden in situation 4 (work schedule). Japanese parents (14.1%) selected choice 2 (I felt it as a burden. Or it was imposing) as a reason more frequently than other participants (JS: 5.8%; AS: 6.3%). In this situation, the degree of imposition to demonstrate attentiveness was evaluated as relatively highly (JS: 2.967; JP: 2.619; AS: 1.937) and there was a correlation between the degree of imposition and the evaluation of attentiveness by Japanese parents (see table 2). In other words, Japanese parents felt the attentiveness as a burden, because the degree of imposition to demonstrate attentiveness was high. In the interview data, such comment as "I would feel guilt", which may correspond to feeling it as a burden in the questionnaire data, was made by all the three groups of the participants. Similar to feeling to guilt or burden, some participants in all the three groups felt indebtedness (situation 2 (lunch)), according to the interview data. Some people tend to feel indebtedness even when the degree of imposition to demonstrate attentiveness was not rated very high (JS: 1.666; JP: 1.532; AS: 1.906) as in situation 2 (lunch). From these data, feeling guilt, a burden or indebtedness on receiving attentiveness can be regarded as cross-cultural and cross-generational similarities.

There were other cross-cultural and cross-generational similarities. When attentiveness was expected as in situations 1 (seat) and 2 (lunch) (reasons written in

[17] 1=They appreciate the attentiveness very much. 5=They do not appreciate the attentiveness at all.

[18] 1=small imposition 5=big imposition

choice 3 (other)) in the questionnaire, it is positively evaluated by all the three groups of the participants. The interview data in situations 1 (seat) and 2 (lunch) show that attentiveness is positively evaluated by all the three groups of the participants, when attentiveness was helpful for a beneficiary. These results suggest that acting according to the other party's expectation and helping the other party constitute politeness.

In the present study, the familiarity between a demonstrator and a beneficiary varied (from very close friend/colleague to a stranger). The familiarity did not seem to have influenced the evaluation of attentiveness, which is contradictory to Himeno's (2003) claim, as noted in 3.2. For example, attentiveness demonstrated by a stranger (the least familiar) in situation 6 (rail pass) was positively evaluated, as a pass costs a lot and the person who lost a pass would be in trouble. Attentiveness demonstrated by a close friend/colleague (the most familiar) in situation 2 (lunch) was also positively evaluated. This indicates that whether attentiveness was beneficial to a beneficiary was a more important factor in the evaluation of attentiveness than familiarity between a demonstrator and a beneficiary. In this study, the participants rated the degree of imposition to demonstrate attentiveness, i.e., how much cost a demonstrator had to make to demonstrate attentiveness. However, how beneficial attentiveness was to a beneficiary (benefit to a beneficiary) was not asked, although the participants may have evaluated attentiveness positively when they thought attentiveness was beneficial. An investigation of cost-benefit aspect (i.e., cost to a demonstrator and benefit to a beneficiary of attentiveness) in future research would reveal more about the evaluation of attentiveness[19].

7. Summary and conclusion

In this paper, which has attempted to investigate the evaluation of (im)politeness, I have drawn attention to the importance of non-linguistic aspects as well as to the hearer (or a beneficiary of attentiveness) in politeness research. In particular, the evaluation of attentiveness by the three groups of lay people (Japanese students, Japanese parents and American students) who differed in culture (national groups) and generation was investigated through the questionnaire and interview data. The results show that there were both differences and similarities in the evaluation of attentiveness by the participants. According to the questionnaire data, the differences were found in situations 5 (papers) and 6 (rail pass), and according to the interview data, in situations 3 (book) and 5 (papers). American participants evaluated the attentiveness most negatively in situations 5 (papers) and 6 (rail pass) in the questionnaire; and negative comments were made only by two American participants in situations 3 (book) and 5 (papers) in the interview data. These could be regarded as cross-cultural differences. In other situations, however, there were no major differences, which can be considered to be similarities, i.e., most of the participants evaluated attentiveness positively. Moreover, no generational differences were found, which was contradictory to the anticipation that Japanese parents would evaluate attentiveness more positively than Japanese students. It is implied from these results that the norms (both empirical and moral, as noted in section 1) by the participants in this study do not differ very much, which reflects on the evaluation of attentiveness.

As many factors, which may influence the evaluation of (im)politeness, are intricately tangled, they are not easily tangible. The questionnaire and interview data, however, may be able to untangle some of the factors. Matching to a beneficiary's expectation, being beneficial or helpful to a beneficiary, inferring a beneficiary's needs were triggers to a positive evaluation; and excessiveness, such as "super-nice," or a beneficiary's feeling it as a burden lead to a negative evaluation. From these results, it

[19] I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Geoffrey Leech for his valuable comments to consider the aspect of cost-benefit in attentiveness research.

can be said that the former three factors can constitute politeness, the latter two impoliteness.

In many cross-cultural studies, cross-cultural differences have been emphasized. Indeed, there were some cross-cultural differences in this study. Similarities should be, however, also noted, if there are any, since having similarities is also important in cross-cultural studies. In this study, there were similarities on the evaluation of attentiveness by different groups of people. If "social identity face" and "equity rights" (Spencer-Oatey 2002) are universal across cultures, and if attentiveness entails "social identity face" or "equity rights," as Sifianou and Tzanne (2010: 672) argue, the evaluation of attentiveness by different groups of people may be similar. Further cross-cultural and cross-generational comparison on the evaluation of attentiveness will be definitely needed in order to confirm this claim. Cross-cultural comparisons with some other cultural groups or cross-generational comparisons with many more age differences will reveal more about the evaluation of attentiveness. An investigation of metadiscursive commentary on attentiveness, an underlying concept of attentiveness, such as empathy, and a prerequisite for attentiveness to arise, i.e., inference, will further the understanding of attentiveness.

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